

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 312955  
ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03  
INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02  
CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 L-03 /058 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/WE:BMCKINLEY:JKB  
APPROVED BY EUR/WE - EMROWELL  
-----300126Z 026121 /67

R 292332Z DEC 76  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY ROME  
INFO AMCONSUL GENOA  
AMCONSUL MILAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV, BBAK, IT

SUBJECT: TORRINGTON REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

1. RAYMOND G. O'CONNELL, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE TORRINGTON COMPANY, TOGETHER WITH ROBERT P. WASSUNG, INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT, AND FRANK W. TUCKER, DISTRICT MANAGER, CALLED ON DEPTOFF DECEMBER 29 TO REVIEW RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TORRINGTON CASE AND SEEK STATE DEPT ASSISTANCE.

2. TWO IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS HAVE OCCURRED IN RECENT WEEKS, ASIDE FROM THE POSSIBLE NEGRI BOSSI INITIATIVE DESCRIBED IN STATE 304990. ON DECEMBER 17 TORRINGTON WAS INFORMED THAT ALL ITS FORMER EMPLOYEES HAVE RECEIVED THEIR TERMINATION PAY. THE CONTINUED OCCUPATION OF THE TORRINGTON GENOA PLANT IS THEREFORE ILLEGAL, ACCORDING TO TORRINGTON'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 STATE 312955

INTERPRETATION, SINCE THE EMPLOYEES NO LONGER HAVE ANY STATUS WITH THE COMPANY. ACCORDING TO TORRINGTON EXECUTIVES, THE MAYOR OF GENOA IN LATE NOVEMBER, ON THE LAST AVAILABLE DAY, APPEALED THE DECISION OF THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL, WHICH SUSPENDED THE MAYOR'S REQUISITION ORDER. NEVERTHELESS, ONCE AGAIN ACCORDING TO

TORRINGTON'S LEGAL INTERPRETATION, THE MAYOR'S APPEAL DOES NOT LEGALLY STAY THE TRIBUNAL'S SUSPENSION, AND TORRINGTON

IS FREE TO INITIATE A REQUEST FOR LOCAL POLICE ASSISTANCE IN CLEARING THEIR PROPERTY OF TRESPASSERS. TORRINGTON EXECUTIVES REALIZE SUCH A REQUEST WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE HONORED AND THEY DO NOT RPT NOT AT PRESENT INTEND TO PROCEED ALONG THOSE LINES.

3. THE SECOND DEVELOPMENT IS AN APPROACH BY ONE DR. MASSEROLI OF GEPI. APPARENTLY RECOGNIZING FOR THE FIRST TIME TORRINGTON'S POSITION ON THEIR SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT, MASSEROLI REQUESTED THAT TORRINGTON QUOTE A SALES PRICE FOR THE LAND, THE BUILDINGS, AND SUCH EQUIPMENT (FURNACES, PRESSES, LATHES AND GRINDERS), WHICH TORRINGTON WOULD BE WILLING TO LEAVE BEHIND. TORRINGTON NAMED A FIGURE OF 2 BILLION LIRE (\$2.3 MILLION). THIS PROPOSAL DOES NOT INCLUDE THE SALE OF TORRINGTON SPECIALIZED KNITTING NEEDLE MACHINERY, WHICH THE COMPANY STILL INTENDS TO REMOVE. TORRINGTON EXECUTIVES REVEALED THAT COMPANY WOULD ATTEMPT TO CONDITION SALE ON RECEIPT OF A LICENSE FROM THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT TO EXPORT THEIR SPECIALIZED MACHINERY, BUT IF THEY COULD NOT GET AN EXPORT LICENSE, THEY WOULD DESTROY IT.

4. GEPI HAS NOT RESPONDED TO TORRINGTON'S PROPOSAL EXCEPT TO INQUIRE WHETHER THE COMPANY WOULD CONSIDER LEASING THE LAND, BUILDING AND NON-SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT WHICH THEY HAD OFFERED FOR SALE. TORRINGTON REPLIED THAT THEY WERE NOT INTERESTED IN A LEASE ARRANGEMENT.  
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PAGE 03     STATE 312955

5. TORRINGTON'S APPROACH TO THIS DIFFICULT PROBLEM HAS NOT CHANGED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AND A HALF OF THEIR OCCUPATION BY ITALIAN WORKERS. THEY HAVE ACTED PRUDENTLY AND INTEND TO CONTINUE DOING SO. THEY DO NOT DESIRE TO BECOME EMBROILED IN SUITS AND COUNTERSUITS OVER THE LEGALITY OF THEIR ACTIONS OR THOSE OF THE MAYOR OR OTHER PARTICIPANTS. THEY DESIRE SIMPLY TO REMOVE THEMSELVES FROM THE SITUATION ON THE BEST TERMS THEY CAN GET.

6. IN VIEW OF THE NEW DEVELOPMENTS OUTLINED ABOVE, EMBASSY SHOULD APPROACH THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL AND, DRAWING ON THE ABOVE, INDICATE TORRINGTON'S WILLINGNESS TO PROCEED TO A SOLUTION OF THEIR LONG-STANDING PROBLEM. EMBASSY SHOULD ATTEMPT TO LEARN FROM THE MINISTRY WHATEVER BACKGROUND IS AVAILABLE TO IT ON GEPI'S REQUEST FOR AN OFFER TO SELL -- PARTICULARLY THE SERIOUSNESS OF GEPI'S INTENTION TO BUY AND ITS PLANS

FOR USE OF THE PLANT -- AND SHOULD URGE THE MINISTRY TO  
ATTEMPT TO CONVINCE GEPI TO MOVE AHEAD.

7. TORRINGTON EXECUTIVES WOULD PREFER THAT FOR THE TIME

BEING THE NEGRI BOSSI POSSIBILITY NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH  
THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. ADDRESSEES SHOULD NOTE THAT STATE  
304990 INCORRECTLY IDENTIFIED FRANCO ROSATTI AS NEGRI  
BOSSI'S ITALIAN MANAGER. ROSATTI IN FACT IS INGERSOLL-RAND  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS BASED IN  
WOODCLIFF LAKE, NEW JERSEY, AND IS AT PRESENT TAKING NO  
PART IN NEGRI BOSSI SALE. WHERE ROSATTI'S NAME APPEARS  
IN REFTTEL, READ "NEGRI BOSSI'S ITALIAN MANAGER (NAME  
UNKNOWN)".  
ROBINSON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** SALES, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, PROGRESS REPORTS, BUSINESS FIRMS, MEETING REPORTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 29 DEC 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** vogelfj  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976STATE312955  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** BMCKINLEY:JKB  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760475-0865  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t1976126/aaaaaemy.tel  
**Line Count:** 130  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** vogelfj  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 12 MAY 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <12 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <15 SEP 2004 by vogelfj>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** TORRINGTON REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE  
**TAGS:** EINV, BBAK, IT, US, TORRINGTON CO, (O'CONNELL, RAYMOND G), (WASSUNG, ROBERT P), (TUCKER, FRANK W)  
**To:** ROME  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006